

***Wild nature in the city* - An installation project for the urban environment – Brussels 2008-2009**

Art and the environment - What is a weed ?

1. Nature in the city

The situation of nature in the city, and more particularly that which takes into account biodiversity in the management of urbanization and urban development have very high stakes today.

The limits between the city and the countryside are becoming noticeably difficult. Urban growth is becoming more and more rapid, transforming natural landscapes into domesticated landscapes with concrete. Thus, the spread of urbanization goes against sustainable development. Urban environments have, for a longtime, been considered as environments where nature has no rights to be there and where the vegetation has been reduced to the condition of weeds.

2. Weeds

But what is it that we call a 'weed'? A plant that has no place? A plant that is not attractive enough? The cities and towns have been therefore sterilized of all wildlife with the exception of parks, gardens and green spaces where the nature has been tamed to fit the plan. It's still the case concerning numerous urban and semi-urban green spaces today where the slightest amount of wild plants are tracked down by weed killer and other plant sanitation products which then reemerge in the surface water and underground.

3. The environmental question - the heart of the debate

The growth in awareness of environmental issues is little by little changing things. The populations in urban areas are demanding breathing spaces.

The epic stories of social progress and economic standing are over and are being replaced by those of the restoration of the planet and sustainable development. The empathy with nature appears suddenly, like a new ideal.

4. Art and the environment

During the artistic event *Wild nature in the city*, debates around the subject of the environment will be organized. International and multidisciplinary conferences on the collaboration between art and ecology make evident the interrelation between the practical and projects which generate links between practitioners. Scientific and environmental groups count more and more on the arts to find partnerships, giving way to collaborations and the transmission and translation of vital information which each collaborator can comment upon and question using different forms.

Art constructs the landscape of ecology and gives a visibility and sensitivity that nature alone does not show.

5. Artistic approach

Chaos and the invasion of space constitutes the essence of my art practice: About the installation *Wild nature in the City*, it acts to show the evidence of the magical vegetal disorder by the displacement of this freed nature, insubordinate to the urban environment. The realization of this project results in certain environmental preoccupations linked to the maintenance and development of biodiversity but it, forms, above all, part of a continuous artistic practice.

Technical Description

1. Finding the site

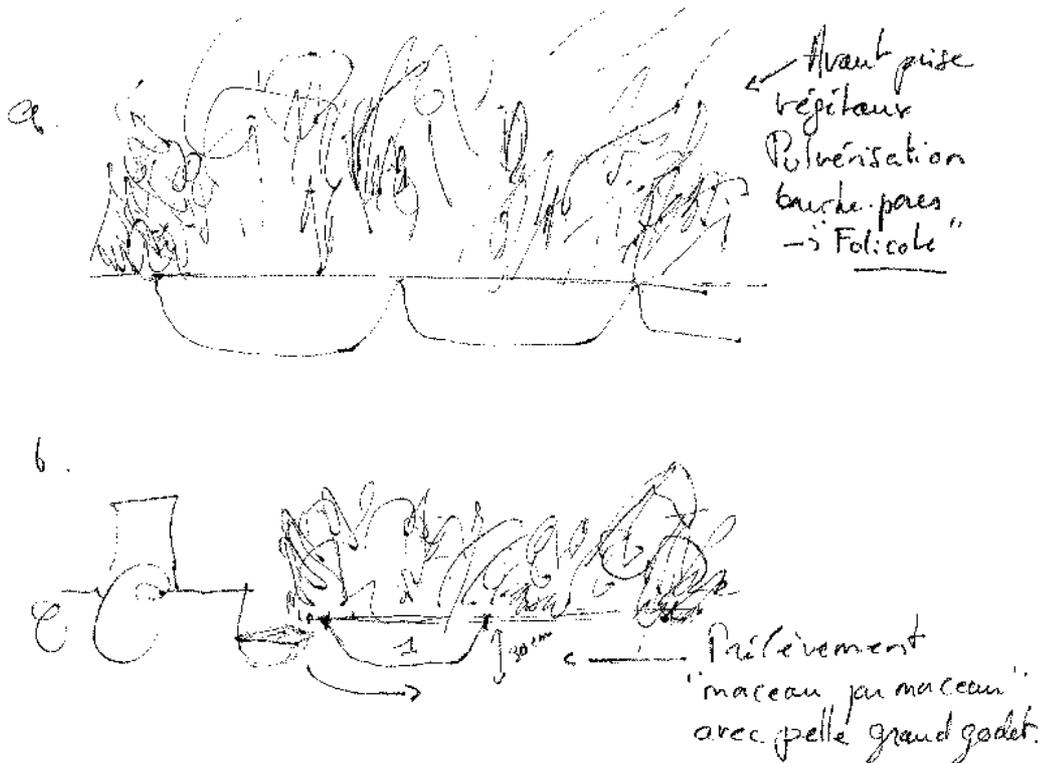
Find an empty plot of ground, preferably some land that is on 'standby' in the city of Brussels. Type of vegetation: vegetation which is dense and grows quickly and easily (nettles, wild flowers, wheat grasses, brambles). Clay soil

2. Sampling

540 square meters with a depth of 30 cm will be sampled.

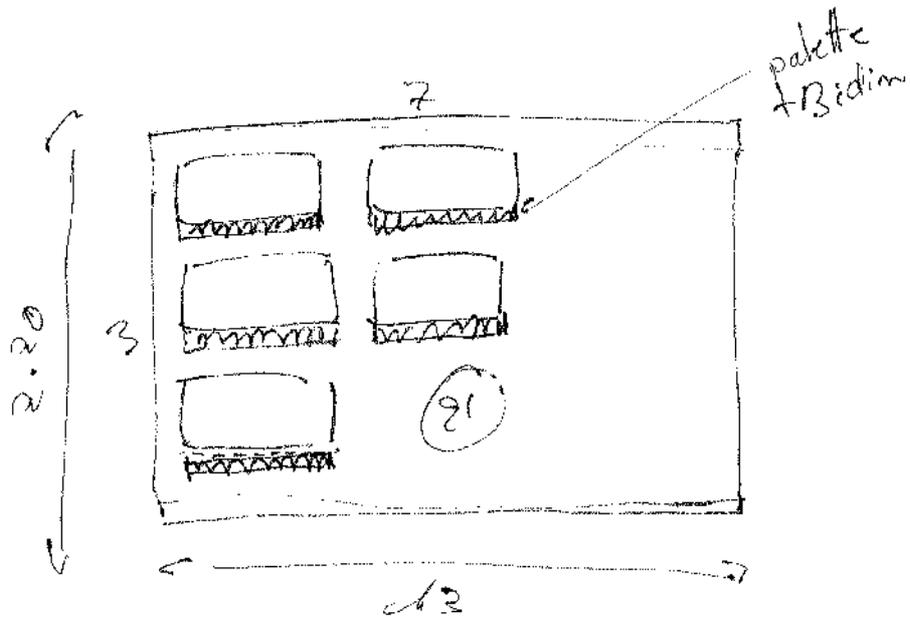
Giving a total volume for the sample of: 162 cubic meters.

The surface to sample is pre-cut into squares measuring 120 x 80 cm with a specialized cutter, this will result in 563 squares. Sampling of each square with a spade "grand godet" (1.5 x 1 meter depth).



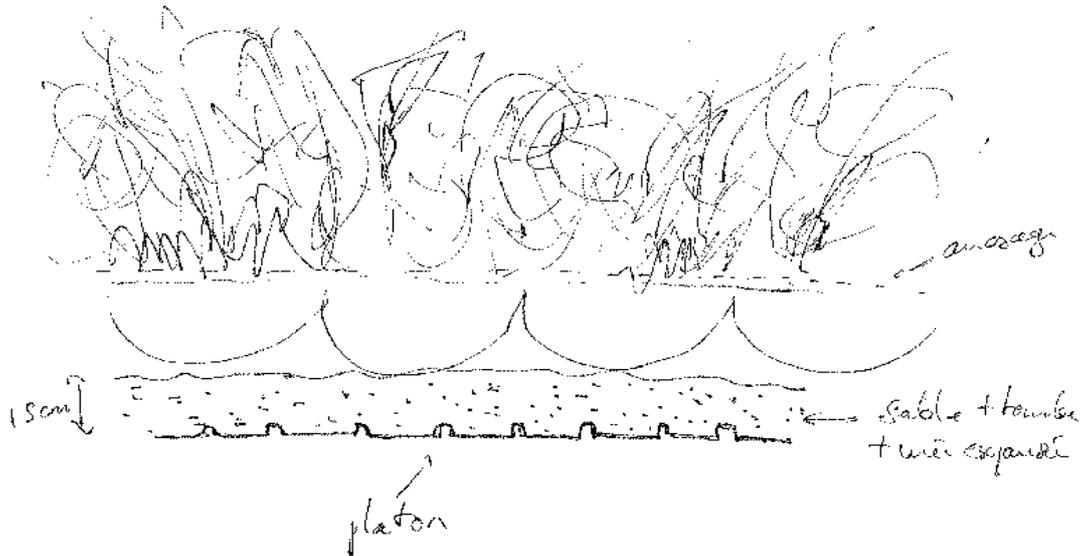
3. Transport

An articulated lorry of 13,2 x 2.40 meters for transporting the squares of vegetation. This size of lorry can carry 30 squares each time, a total of 19 loads. Each square will sit on a wooden palette of the same dimension (120 x 80cm) so can be loaded and unloaded easily.



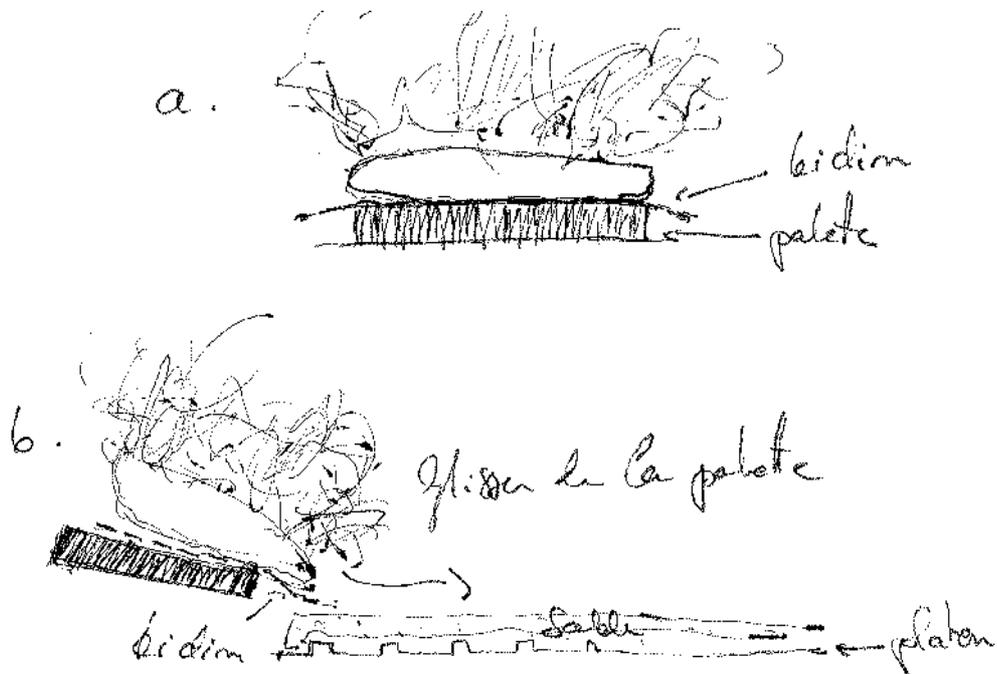
4. The preparation of place Sainte-Catherine (1650 square meters)

A tarpaulin placed on the ground covering a surface of 540 meters squared. Automatic sprinkler system for watering.



5. Putting in place

Each palette is placed on a fork lift truck which will place each square one by one on the reserved space in place Sainte-Catherine.



6. Finishing

The earth is added to the area surrounding the sample of vegetation in the form of an incline at the end to ensure reinforcement. Duration of installation: 2 days



7. Removal and Re-placing

At the end of the event, removal of the turf and transportation back to the place from where it was sampled. Placing the turf back into its cavity of origin.

Collaboration

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